Policy Framework for Satellite Communications

2773. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in July 1997 the Department of Space issued a press release conveying the approval of the Union Cabinet to the policy framework for satellite communications in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have since framed norms for the implementation of the said policy; and

(d) if not, the reasons for such inordinate delay in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The full text of the Press Release issued by the Department of Space on July 17, 1997 is given in the Statement (*See* below)

(c) and (d) After the Government approved the Satellite Communications (SATCOM) policy, the Department of Space (DOS) constituted an Inter-Departmental Committee to evolve the norms, guidelines and procedures for implementation of the policy framework for satellite communications in India. After obtaining the concurrence of all participating Departments, the Draft norms and Guidelines have been sent for final approval cycle of the Government. The delay in formulating the guidelines is mainly due to various technical clarifications sought by the participating Departments, obtaining their concurrence and the need to align the SATCOM policy norms and guidelines with other relevant policies.

Statement

The Union Cabinet has approved a policy framework for satellite communications in India. The salient features of this policy are (a) tranponder capacity on INSAT system would be offered to non-governmental users also on commercial terms subject to capacity availability, (b) Indian private parties will be permitted to establish commercial communications satellite and the parties will be assisted in registering such satellite systems and networks with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) as Indian satellites and (c) operations from Indian soil will be allowed with both Indian and foreign satellites in accordance with the norms and conditions to be evolved, but Indian satellites will be accorded preferential treatment. Insofar as the Satellite based broadcasting is concerned, the various provisions of the Satellite Communications Policy framework would conform to the proposed Broadcasting Law.

Satellite Communications has become a fundamental infrastructure of the communications network in the country and hence needs to be properly regulated for orderly growth. Further, Indian Satellite systems have to comply with various United Nations and International Telecommunications Union (ITU) treaties and other International agreements to which India is a Party. With this far reaching decision of the Cabinet, in the next few months, the Government will work out the norms and conditions concerning the various aspects of the policy for its effective implementation. It is expected that the enunciation of the policy framework will lead to the development of a healthy and thriving communications satellite and ground equipment industry as well as satellite communications service industry in India. This will also open the INSAT system for wider usage.

Command Area Development Programme

2774. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States which have been brought under Command Area Development Programme (C.A.D.P.) by Government;